

State of California
Business, Transportation and Housing Agency
Department of Transportation

POLICY MATTERS
Traffic Congestion Relief Program
Informational Item

CTC Meeting: July 11-12, 2001

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STATUS OF TRAFFIC CONGESTION RELIEF (TCR) PROGRAM

BACKGROUND

Assembly Bill 2928 (AB 2928) which provided for the implementation of the Traffic Congestion Relief Program (TCRP) was signed by Governor Davis on July 6, 2000. AB 2928 stipulated that guidelines for the implementation of the program be adopted by the Commission within 90 days. AB 2928 further stipulated that a project application must be submitted for each of the 141 projects included in the Program by July 2002. Applications can be submitted upon adoption of the TCRP guidelines. The TCRP guidelines were adopted by the Commission at its September 28, 2000 meeting.

STATUS

Since September 28, 2000 when the first project applications were approved by the Commission, 109 of the 141 projects totaling \$1,744,720,000 have project approval. Should the project applications submitted for consideration at the July 2001 Commission meeting be approved, 122 of the 141 projects (87%) will have received initial project approval. These approvals total \$2,210,465,000, accounting for 45% of the dollars available for the TCRP.

There are 19 projects remaining that require an application submittal to meet the July 2002 deadline. It is anticipated that most of these will be submitted by the end of the calendar year.

INNOVATIONS AND STREAMLINING OPPORTUNITIES

The TCRP has been and continues to be a catalyst for change. The Department continues to look for opportunities to streamline existing processes as the TCRP is a laboratory for testing and proving the viability of new efficiencies. To accomplish the above, a significant effort has been made by the Department, Commission staff, and by each of the lead applicants and implementing agencies. These actions include:

1. Opening dialogue and building stronger partnerships between agencies to ensure that appropriate projects are funded and implemented – regardless of jurisdictional boundaries.
2. Providing opportunities for innovative funding strategies
3. Expediting TCRP application and allocation process
4. Early review of TCRP applications
5. Delegating allocation authority to the Department
6. Modifying and improving the agreement process
7. Expediting payments to local agencies
8. Advance payment of State funds to accelerate project initiation and delivery activities

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

As we move further with program implementation, more opportunities for improvement will arise. Proposed actions to further streamline current processes include:

1. Adopting the proposed policy for project amendment approvals (Item 4.4b) – Project amendments have recently been submitted for Commission consideration and approval. Some are significant in nature and require Commission review and approval. Others are more ministerial in nature and may be more appropriate for Department and Commission staff action. Agenda Item 4.4b specifically addresses this issue.
2. Delegating STIP allocation authority to the Department for TCRP projects – Many TCRP projects also utilize STIP funding. STIP allocation process (“funds vote”) typically takes between 30-60 days. For those projects with both STIP and TCRP funding, the advantages of the delegated authority for TCRP funds are lost since STIP funding still require a Commission vote. With delegated authority, an allocation can be made in as little as two weeks.

FUTURE REPORTS

With applications submitted for most of the projects and work initiated, the focus by the Department and Commission staff will be on program delivery. Pursuant to the adopted TCRP guidelines, each lead applicant is required to submit a progress report twice a year on April 1 and October 1. These reports will provide information necessary to assess the current project progress, project costs by phase, schedule for delivery by phase, actual expenditures and status of work. Progress reports and future applications will also identify funding commitments to fully fund each project. Progress reports will also identify significant issues that the project may be encountering which may impact its implementation or progress. Bi-annual TCRP status reports will be made to the Commission upon submittal of the progress reports by the lead applicants and review by Department and Commission staff.